



# Illinois Department of Transportation



U.S. ROUTE 30 EIS & PHASE I DESIGN REPORT  
WHITESIDE COUNTY NATURAL AREA GUARDIANS  
JUNE 11, 2009 - ODELL COMMUNITY CENTER/LIBRARY  
6:00p.m.

Attendees:

Name	Phone	Address	Email
Sandy Rideout	772-4117	517 N. Geneva	
MARIA WAE+			
BILL BIAGI	956-0222	604 GREENWOOD	
Beth Dinges Hofus		Po Box 6 Fenton	
Marie Smith	772-2996	Morrison, Ill.	
C Rambo	4-7317	" "	
Nancy Anderson	772-7699	503 E. Wall St.	
Bob Stone	3098874691	Fulton Ill	
Chau Knudsen	815-626-5757	10080 Bull Rd Rock Falls Ill.	cknuu@thewisp.net
Carolyn Keller	815-626-4759	1716 W. 4th Sterling	
Anna Wheat	815-537-5218	13272 Blackhawk Rd. Pittsboro	
Dominique	815-718-5022	" "	
Tina Keller	626-4759	1716 W 4th Sterling	
Elisa Rideout	815-772-4117	517 N. Geneva St	
Margo Owano	815-625-7071	19396 Noel Ct Morrison	owano@att.net
Alex Becker	815-772-7555	16020 Staley Rd	

IDOT – Becky Marruffo, Dawn Perkins, Mark Nardini, Cassandra Rodgers  
Volkert & Associates – Mike Walton, Bridgett Jacquot  
H.R. Green Company – Jon Estrem, Gil Janes  
Kaskaskia Engineering Group – Mary Lou Goodpaster

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This meeting was held in order to provide the Whiteside County Natural Area Guardians (NAG) an update on the U.S. 30 project. The NAGs were provided with a copy of the presentation.

Dawn Perkins of IDOT kicked off the meeting by welcoming and thanking the NAGs for attending the meeting.

### **Purpose & Need**

Mike Walton went on to provide an overview of the Purpose & Need for the project which is to reduce traffic congestion, improve traffic capacity, improve safety, accommodate freight, and establish roadway continuity.

### **Environmental Survey Results to be Discussed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)**

Mary Lou Goodpaster provided the details of the environmental survey results for the biological, wetlands, cultural, and special waste issues that will be discussed in detail in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). During her discussion of the biological survey results, she explained that no federally listed threatened or endangered species were collected during the studies conducted for the US 30 project. However, there are historic records of federally listed species for the study area, and the project team will continue to coordinate with US Fish & Wildlife Service.

*It was not stated in the meeting but for informational purposes two additional Myotis individuals (a post-lactating female and a juvenile) exhibited some, but not all, the diagnostic features characteristic of the Indiana bat. Thus, although a definitive identification was not made, it is possible that an Indiana bat maternity colony inhabits the riparian corridor or island on the west side of the Rock River. No Indiana bats were caught at this site in 2008. We have to assume they are present.*

During the wetlands discussion, Mary Lou explained that about 80 wetlands had been confirmed in the study area. Based on the vegetation present within the wetlands, there are no “high quality” wetlands. *After the meeting it was determined that there are three sedge meadows and one wet meadow that are of considered high quality wetlands.*

The better quality wetlands in the study area are sedge meadows. In addition, Mary Lou explained that other issues that will be discussed in the DEIS are agriculture, socio-economic, air, and noise. All of the completed biological reports are available on the U.S. 30 website <http://www.dot.il.gov/us30/index1.html> . *In addition, a hard copy of the reports were given to Elisa Rideout after the meeting for the NAG group.*

The environmental surveys are conducted by the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS), Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS), and the Illinois Transportation Archaeological Research Program (ITARP). The environmental survey results are coordinated with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and the Army Corps of Engineers (COE).

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The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process is the process that IDOT and FHWA are required to follow for this project. NEPA states that government agencies must be responsible for their actions and impacts to the environment. The purpose of NEPA is to avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental impacts.

The DEIS will include documentation of the affected environment (description of the environment within the project study area), environmental consequences (description of the environmental impacts associated with each alternative), and the measures that are being taken to minimize harm to the environment. Documentation will be prepared for: social/economic, agriculture, cultural resources, air quality, noise, groundwater resources, surface water & aquatic resources, wetlands, floodplains, natural resources, wildlife resources, threatened & endangered species, special lands, special waste, permits/certifications, and visual resources.

### **Corridors to Alignments**

Jon Estrem presented the corridor and alignment portion of the presentation. The project started with corridors that were approximately 1400 feet wide and the project has progressed to the development of alternative alignments of approximately 200 feet wide; this would be width required for a four lane highway, which is what was assumed when developing the footprints for the alternative alignments. Six initial alignments were created.

Adjustments to the six initial alignments were made in order to avoid or minimize impacts. The following adjustments were made with the assumption of a cross section of a divided 4-lane:

- Center of each corridor
- Use of existing highway and right of way (ROW)
- Other adjustments that include: environmental resources, houses, farms, businesses, potential historic properties, cemeteries, use of existing bridges, and improved locations for stream crossings.

The entire length of each alignment was studied to find potential adjustments. The NAG was shown an example of an adjustment to avoid structures south of Morrison.

After the adjustments were made, the six alternative alignments were screened in a matrix against 23 factors within four major categories: traffic & safety, social & economic, environmental, and cost. The alignments were then scored and ranked. *The NAGs were provided a copy of the matrix in the presentation handout.*

### **Description of the six alternative alignments**

Each alignment as described below starts on the west end of the project at IL 136/Frog Pond Road and continues east to the Moline Road intersection.

- The alignments west of Morrison go either north of U.S. 30 or stay on existing U.S. 30

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- The alignments continue and go either north or south of Morrison
  - The alignments east of Morrison go either south of U.S. 30 or stay on existing U.S. 30 until Moline Road
  - From the Moline Road intersection, all alignments continue on existing U.S. 30 to the IL 40 intersection.
    - Alignment #1 North, North, Existing
    - Alignment #2 North, South, Existing
    - Alignment#3 North, South, South
    - Alignment #4 Existing, North, Existing
    - Alignment #5 Existing, South, Existing
    - Alignment#6 Existing, South, South

### **Rankings**

Alternatives 4 and 5 ranked #1

Alternative 6 ranked #3

Alternative 1 ranked #4

Alternative 2 and 3 ranked #5

### **Potential Environmental Impacts**

Potential environmental impacts associated with the six alignments were discussed. It was pointed out that the alignments have been adjusted to avoid and minimize environmental impacts. As the alignments move forward in the study, the alignments will continue to be refined to avoid as many environmental impacts as possible.

- Currently there are impacts to agricultural ground and are severances to farm properties. Impacts of these alignments and eventually the preferred will be discussed in a separate agricultural technical report and summarized in the DEIS.
- Centennial and Sesquicentennial farms have been identified within the project study area and a few are currently impacted.
- There are some impacts to special waste sites. Special waste can be mitigated either prior to or during construction.
- There are a number of city parks and Morrison Rockwood State Park within the project study area. Currently there are no direct impacts to parks.
- 27 potential historic structures have been identified by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). If any of these structures are impacted, a separate report will need to be produced and coordinated with the IHPA for signature.
- There are no impacts to the Lyndon Agnew Nature Preserve. IDNR does not allow impacts to nature preserves unless in very unique situations. At this point in time, no impacts are expected.
- There are minimal impacts to wetlands. Any impacts to wetlands will require mitigation. Due to the location of these wetlands within an agricultural community, a majority of the wetlands are degraded and most likely will require a low ratio of mitigation.
- 100 year floodplains, forests, wildlife habitat, and prairies have been identified. Currently there are no impacts to prairie.
- Displacements are also considered an environmental issue as part of the human environment. Currently there are a number of displacements associated with the alternative alignments. Twice as many displacements would occur with Alternatives #1 and #4.

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## **Timeline**

The completion of Phase I is anticipated for June 2012.

## **Comments, Question & Response**

Question: What is NEPA? Response: National Environmental Policy Act; it will be explained later in the presentation.

Question: What area has been studied for environmental resources? Response: The area is highlighted on the map. It is approximately 10 miles wide and 25 miles long.

Question: What are visual resources? Response: An example would be the bluffs north of the Quad Cities; you would not want to ruin that view with a roadway that is not designed to be sensitive to the visual quality of an area.

Question: Is USGS involved? The Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) conducts some of the environmental surveys.

Question: What about the covered bridge? Response: Alternative #4 currently goes north of the covered bridge.

Question: Are bike trails being considered? Response: Yes, bike trails must be considered under IDOT policy and therefore will be considered as part of this project.

Question: Which environmental impact is considered more significant: a noise impact or a wetland impact? Response: Wetlands have stronger laws to protect them but at this point, we have not done the in-depth studies to make that type of decision at this time.

Question: Where did the costs come from? Response: The cost analysis was done in-house and includes maintenance costs.

Question: What is the traffic volume just east of Morrison? Response: Currently 6,000 to 8,000 ADT and 11,000-12,000 in the City of Morrison with 11-25% of that being truck traffic.

Question: Will trucks (mainly local carrying grain and cattle) be able to access the roadway? Response: There will be limited access and to secondary roadways; similar to IL 2.

Comment: The discussion of area geology and visual resources should include a discussion of the Paha glacial features west of Morrison. Response: We will look into it.

Question: Is the floodplain mapping based on FEMA? Concerns were expressed about the accuracy of that mapping as evidenced by recent flooding in New Orleans and Cedar Rapids. Response: We are required to use the FEMA mapping as the basis for our floodplain analysis under NEPA. However, detailed hydrologic modeling will be conducted during design for the selected alternative.

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Comment: The presenter discussed the generally low quality of the wetlands in the study area, but that quality could be greatly improved by proper management. Response: That is true, and is one of the reasons that state and federal law protect all wetlands, regardless of quality. However, the mitigation requirements established under the Illinois Interagency Wetlands Policy Act are based, in part, on the existing wetland quality.

Question: Can wetland mitigation for this project take place anywhere in Illinois. Responses: Except under very special circumstances, mitigation must be conducted within the same major watershed area as the impact. There are two wetland mitigation banks in District 2 (one in the Rock River Basin and one in the Mississippi River Basin) that are doing very well and wetland impacts from this project (if any) may be mitigated at these locations. Alternatively, a mitigation site may be selected within the project study area.

Comment: Alternative 4 goes between Morrison and the State Park. Concerns were expressed about the impacts, especially noise, to the park from a nearby major transportation facility. In addition there were concerns about “destroying” the park and separating the park from the city of Morrison. How will these impacts be taken into account, and has any coordination occurred with the Morrison State Park staff? Response: A meeting has been held with representatives of the State Park. While they noted that a highway facility near the park would provide better visibility and access for the park, they also noted some concerns. The impacts of this alternative, including potential increases in traffic noise, will be fully evaluated and additional coordination will occur with the park representatives.

Question: Why are you in the north? Response: NEPA requires that we look at all viable alternatives and the one to the north is still a viable alternative.

Question: Has coordination with the railroads taken place – what are their opinions about the alternatives? Response: We have had only limited coordination with the railroads to date. The project team is very experienced in working with railroads. The railroad companies are generally not interested in being highly engaged in the early stages of highway planning. We will contact them when we have an appropriate level of information to share with them.

Question: How old are the traffic and accident data that were used in the development of the project’s Purpose and Need? Have changes in the economy affected the need for an improved facility? Response: The analysis of need was initially based on 2007 data: traffic and accident data are updated every two years and we expect to have the new data shortly. These data will continue to be updated throughout the course of the study. The traffic and crash analyses are available on the US 30 website.

Comment: Getting semis off of our nation’s highways should be a high priority for transportation planning.

Question: Will local traffic be able to access the new US 30? Response: The study is based on the assumption that this facility would be an expressway, not a freeway. Access would be more limited than it is now, but at grade intersections will likely be provided for every crossroad.

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Question: Will all secondary roads have intersections? Response: At this time we have no plans to close any county or township roads.

Question: What about overall US 30 system continuity – what is Iowa doing about its sections of two-lane US 30. Response: Gil Janes discussed the status of upgrading US 30 within Iowa.

Question: What is considered special waste? Response: Any hazardous waste site such as the landfill, gas stations and certain factories.

Question: What about impacts to businesses in Morrison from construction of a bypass? Response: The socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives, including impacts to businesses inside Morrison, will be assessed as part of the EIS process.

Question: Has any consideration been given to the presence of the ancient Mississippi River channel west of Morrison? Response: This will be part of the floodplain analysis.

Question: What takes precedence, impact to agricultural land or impact to buildings? Response: In the NEPA process the Natural Environment outweighs the Human Environment.

Comment by Consultant Team: Under NEPA the Natural Environment does outweigh the Human Environment but substantial opposition from the public can cause an alignment to be eliminated.

Question: What is the ROD? Response: Record of Decision.